

EDWARD FROST

(A Vintage Vignette by John P. Rankin, September 1, 2009)

Don Frost of Athens submitted a story about his ancestor Edward Frost in the book "**Heritage of Madison County, Alabama**" (1998). Don wrote that Edward was born around 1770 in Bedford County, Virginia. He was a son of Reverend John Frost. Edward married Amilla Roberts in 1791 in Washington County, Virginia. Amilla was a daughter of Cornelius and Mary (Benton) Roberts. Cornelius was killed by Indians in 1788 while he was digging ginseng roots. Amilla's mother, Mary, later married Reverend John Frost, Edward's father. Mary Benton was said to be a cousin of Thomas Hart Benton, a U.S. Senator and strong supporter of Andrew Jackson.

The Frost family history includes the founding of Baptist churches. Edward's father had a role in building the "Frost Meeting House" where the North Fork Baptist congregation was established in 1776. Edward's and related families left Washington County in 1795 to resettle in Knox County, Tennessee. The site became part of Anderson County in 1801. While there, Edward's father and uncles established the Chestnut Ridge Baptist Church, which was later reorganized as the Zion Baptist Church in the Claxton community near Clinton.

Edward left Anderson County in 1808 and settled on Chickasaw land west of today's Indian Creek and the old Chickasaw Indian Boundary Line. Edward Frost was one of the squatters removed from the Indian Creek area by Federal troops in 1809. He was also among the 450 signers of an 1810 petition to the U. S. government representing a squatter population of 2250, as published in the book "**Sims Settlement, Our Squatter Ancestors, 1806-1818**" by Ruth Dixon and Bob Priest (1989). These petitioners requested that they be allowed to remain on Indian lands, even though several removals of the squatter pioneers by Federal troops had already occurred. The government was trying to keep the Chickasaws from becoming allies of the British as the War of 1812 was looming. The petition stated that "**...they (the Indians) have by estimation (sic) nearly 100,000 acres of land to each man of their nation and of no more use to government or society than to saunter about upon like so many wolves or bares (sic)...**" The petition failed, and squads of soldiers were sent to displace the squatters in 1810, 1811, and 1812. Corn crops, fences, and cabins were burned, and the pioneers were forced back onto the legally settled portions of today's Madison County. However, the Indians noted that the squatter intruders were "**...just like crows frightened away by a passing person. As soon as he is past, they return.**"

Apparently, Edward Frost was like a crow also. According to Don Frost's story, he persevered on Indian land until it became legal to purchase it from the government in 1818 after the Chickasaw cession. However, he was not found in Margaret Matthews Cowart's listings of "**Old Land Records of Madison County, Alabama**". Still, Don Frost's account says that Edward's home was along today's Zierdt Road, about 1-1/2 miles south of Interstate 565. That location put him at the site of Lady Ann Lake, either on or adjacent to the land owned by Isaac Inman. It was Isaac who in 1817 married Martha, one of Edward's daughters. Perhaps in 1818 Isaac purchased the parcel where Edward (his father-in-law) had his home and allowed Edward to remain on the property. In the 1830 and 1840 censuses, Edward was living in Morgan County.

Edward Frost and his wife Amelia are listed in numerous postings to Ancestry.com. Most such postings state that they had nine children, but one lists ten. In the 1850 census Edward was not included when Amelia at age 74 was found in the household of her daughter Cenia Sinai Frost with husband James Williams in Morgan County. Amelia ("Amilla") had the middle name of Milly. A combination of the

two given names could have possibly led to a phonetic variation as “Ameline” or “Emeline”, providing a namesake of the “Emeline Cemetery”. It is unknown whether Amelia is buried in the Emeline-Inman Cemetery on Isaac Inman’s land of the arsenal, but Edward died in 1845 and is buried in the Frost Cemetery in West Corona, Walker County.

ADDENDUM (Oct. 12, 2009)

Per a phone call from Don Frost of Athens (256-233-2878), his ancestors included Edward Frost, Sr., who is buried on his old farm in Walker County, Alabama. Edward Frost Jr. is buried in Morgan County, Alabama. Don himself lived 1934 – 1943 in Appleton, Arkansas, on land adjoining the Rankin – Kinslow Cemetery, which was overgrown then. However, he recalled seeing many box crypts in the cemetery and has read the Pope County Arkansas history books about the Rankin line, as he is connected to the Rankin-Poe families of that area. His dentist is Dr. Coffman of Athens, whose family of relatives lived just south of the cemetery when I last visited it in the 1990s. Coffman Grocery is on the main road near where the tractor road through the fields to the cemetery comes out at the paved road into Appleton. Don said that he and his wife visited the Inman Cemetery on the arsenal a few years ago and put a sign on the fence to identify it as the Inman Cemetery, with data about its age and the death dates of Isaac Inman and Amelia.